

NRO review(s) completed.

20 NOV 1970

Reference A: Dr. McLucas' memo raising questions about requirement for near real time system and for crisis response, ocean surveillance, and anti-satellite capabilities.

1. Dr. McLucas says: "The recent reconnaissance problems in the Mid-East and our inability to define what we would really want from a near real time system in such a situation leads me to think that our real needs are not yet clearly understood to justify a system go-ahead."

Comment. On the contrary, we can rather precisely define the kind of coverage we would like to have had in the Mid-East, and we have demonstrated that the near real time system now being designed would have satisfied the need very well.

In addition, virtually every other important past crisis situation has been studied to determine what kind of coverage would have satisfied the analysts and policy makers and you can be assured that the current USIB requirements statement for a near real time system correctly describes the need of each of these crises.

[] is ready to brief Excom members and the NRO on these details at any time. 25X

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An examination of past crisis situations leads one to the conclusion that [redacted] per year would not be a satisfactory solution to the crisis or the strategic warning problem.

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3. Dr. McLucas suggests the possibility of a standby Corona for crisis coverage.

Comment. Setting aside difficulties about responsiveness, data turn around time and sustainability, a very clear requirement for all past crises, including the Mid-East ceasefire, is for high resolution coverage. Corona would not have satisfied any of the past situations.

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[redacted]

Comment. We have not heard details about either alternative and suggest that NRO needs to document these for the Excom before any serious discussion on the subject can take place.

5. Soviet anti-satellite capability. Dr. McLucas recommends that white air force build an inspection capability and possibly a deterrent capability.

Comment. You asked that this subject be discussed, primarily to be sure that the Excom satisfied itself that all that is reasonable to do is being done. The value of building an inspection and retaliatory capability should be balanced against the value of building a low vulnerability contingency reconnaissance system. We would have to know more about what is proposed before we could advise you on this matter.

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We recommend you suggest that the staff of the three principals get together and agree on a set of criteria and study guidelines which will satisfy Dr. David.

Reference C through F are those letters referred to in the agenda and are relevant to the points discussed above.

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